

**Van Vleck ISD District of Innovation Plan**  
*Approval by DOIC: January 24, 2019*  
*Posted Online: January 25, 2019*  
*Approval by VVISD Board: March 18, 2019*

Van Vleck Independent School District (VVISD) is driven by the goals and objectives outlined in our district improvement plan, Board goals, district mission statement, and community input. These factors drive all decisions regarding teaching and learning in VVISD.

In order to better serve our students and align our learning to VVISD goals, we have developed a five-year District of Innovation Plan to provide opportunities that allow the VVISD Board of Trustees the ability to use their best judgement to make decisions regarding the students of VVISD. VVISD is a community with diverse students and unique challenges. Giving the Board and administration local control of these decisions will provide lasting effects on our students, parents, and community. The District of Innovation Plan targets five areas including Transfer Policy, Probationary Contracts, Certifications, School Calendar, and Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade.

**District of Innovation Plan**

**Term:** The term of the plan is for five years, beginning August 1, 2019 and ending July 31, 2024, unless terminated or amended earlier by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the law. If, within the terms of this Plan, other areas of operations are to be considered for flexibility as part of HB 1842, the Board will nominate a new committee to consider and propose additional exemptions in the form of an amendment. Any amendment adopted by the Board will adhere to the same term as the original plan. The District may not implement two separate plans at any one time.

**Transfer Policy:**

*Exemption from TEC §25.036*

*Related Board Policies: FDA (Legal/Local)*

Any child, other than a high school graduate, who is younger than 21 years of age and eligible for enrollment on September 1 of any school year may transfer annually from the child's school district of residence to another district in this state if both the receiving district and the applicant parent or guardian or person having lawful control of the child jointly approve and timely agree in writing to the transfer. A transfer agreement under this section shall be filed and preserved as a receiving district record for audit purposes of the agency.

**Innovative Strategies:**

1. VVISD campus administration and Transfer Committee would be allowed to review and possibly rescind a student's transfer at any time during the school year.

### **Probationary Contracts:**

*Exemption from TEC §21.102*

*Related Board Policies: DCA (Legal)*

For experienced teachers, new to the district, the probationary period may not exceed one year if the person has been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the previous eight years. A one-year probationary period is not sufficient to evaluate the teacher's effectiveness in the classroom since teacher contract renewal timelines demand that employment decisions be made prior to the District's receipt of state assessment results.

### **Innovative Strategies:**

For experienced teachers, counselors, or nurses new to the district that have been employed as a teacher in public education for at least five of the eight previous years, Van Vleck ISD would like the option to extend a second year probationary contract if needed. All other teachers hired in the District may remain on probationary status for three years, and may be issued a fourth year of probation in accordance with TEC §21.102 (c).

### **Certification – General:**

*Exemption from TEC §21.003, §21.053, & §21.057*

*Related Board Policies: DBA (Legal/Local); DK (Legal/Local)*

TEC §21.003(a) states a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B.

### **Innovative Strategies:**

1. The campus administration may submit to the Superintendent a request for local certification that will allow a certified teacher to teach one subject in a related field for which he/she is not certified. The campus administration must specify in writing the reason for the request and document what credentials the certified teacher possesses that would qualify this individual to teach the proposed subject. Emergency or financial situations creating the need for this assignment should also be noted.
2. The current certification requirement severely limits the district's options to hire professionals with work related experience or degrees to teach a variety of courses, including CTE and STEM related courses. In order to provide more students the opportunity to take such courses, and obtain industrial certifications, the District seeks to establish its own local qualification requirements instead of the requirements set forth in TEC §21.003(a). The district does not wish to be exempted from any existing laws relating to teacher contracts or teacher benefits. This exemption will allow the district to:
  - a. Consider part time professionals to teach courses
  - b. Provide an opportunity for professionals to transition from other work related jobs to the teaching profession
  - c. Increase the number of CTE and STEM type courses available
  - d. Grant trade related professionals the ability to teach related courses
3. The Superintendent will report this action to the Board of Trustees as soon as practical.
4. A teacher certification waiver, state permit applications, or other paperwork will not be submitted to the Texas Education Agency.

5. All candidates would be carefully considered to ensure the individual has sufficient education and expertise to provide instruction necessary to meet the TEKS for the course to be taught. Qualifications would include demonstrated subject matter expertise, such as: professional work experience, formal training and education, relevant industry license, certification, or registration; or any combination of these deemed sufficient by the Superintendent and Board of Trustees.
6. The district will ensure criminal background checks are completed as required by the State Board of Education (SBEC).

**School Calendar - School Start and End Date, Need for Local Control:**

*Exemption from TEC §25.0811; TEC §25.0812*

*Related Board Policies: EB (Legal/Local)*

TEC §25.0811 states that a school district may not begin student instruction before the 4th Monday of August. TEC §25.0812 states that a school district may not schedule the last day of school before May 15. The current process allows no flexibility in the design of the annual academic calendars to fit the needs of the community or the desires of the local Board of Trustees who represent community interests in this matter.

***Innovative Strategies: while meeting the overall 75,600 minutes required***

1. Relief from the statute will allow Van Vleck ISD to develop a calendar that addresses student instruction and focused professional development in conjunction with the new instructional minutes' requirement, rather than days.
2. Alignment of the district calendar with local colleges, advanced placement exams, and STAAR timelines.
3. Provide for increased local control of the instructional calendar to be responsive to community needs.

**Minimum Attendance for Class Credit or Final Grade:**

*Exemption from: TEC §25.092*

*Relevant Board Policies: FEC (Legal/Local)*

TEC 25.092 restricts the District from issuing class credit or a final grade if a student is not in attendance the required "seat time", referred to as the 90% rule. This requirement is an arbitrary percentage, where school districts award credit based on seat time rather than demonstrated mastery of learning.

***Innovation Strategies***

1. The District will continue to seek innovative instructional arrangements once provided this flexibility. Van Vleck ISD will pursue blended learning opportunities where instruction is delivered through a combination of time in class and time spent learning online.
2. This exemption will also allow the District not to penalize students who miss class due to legitimate school activities. Relief granted from TEC 25.092 does not constitute any substantive exemption from compulsory attendance or UIL rules, nor does it limit or modify a teacher's ability to assign or determine grades in accordance with TEC §28.0214 and 28.0216.